

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 A-01 OPR-02 SY-05 OC-05 CCO-00 SAM-01

SAB-01 IO-10 AID-05 /092 W

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O R 281110Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5015

DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

USINT BAGHDAD UNN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

USCINCEUR

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STUTTGART FOR ELG

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PGOV, LE, PLO

SUBJECT: OBSERVERS DISCERN GLIMMER OF HOPE FOLLOWING YESTERDAY'S DEPRESSED STATE

REF: BEIRUT 8205

1. INTENSE POLITICAL ACTIVITY LAST NIGHT AND THIS MORNING HAS ONCE AGAIN RAISED HOPES THAT FORMULA CAN BE FOUND TO BREAK IMPASSE IN CABINET FORMATION PROCESS, THEREBY PARTIALLY DISPELLING GENERAL STATE OF DEPRESSED STATE PREVAILING YESTERDAY. BEIRUT PRESS JUNE 28 GENERALLY REPORTS THAT SUMMIT MEETING OF SUNNI MOSLEM POLITICIANS NIGHT JUNE 27 WAS MODERATE AND CONCILIATORY AND SESSION OF CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL LEADERS SET FOR MORNING OF JUNE 28 IS SUBJECT OF CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION AND SPECULATION. SOME WELL-INFORMED OBSERVERS BELIEVE THAT CHRISTIAN CONFAB HOLDS KEY TO SITUATION AND EXPECT THAT CHRISTIAN ALLIES OF PHALANGE WILL SEEK TO CONVINCE LATTER TO ACCEPT FORMATION OF SMALL, TEMPORARY CABINET UNDER PREMIER-DESIGNATE RASHID KARAME WITHOUT RPT WITHOUT PHALANGE REPRESENTATION AT THIS TIME. PROPOSED CABINET, WHICH WOULD REPORTEDLY LAST FOR TWO OR THREE MONTHS AND SERVE PRIMARILY TO MOVE COUNTRY OUT OF CRISIS ATMOSPHERE WHICH HAS DOMINATED LOCAL SCENE SINCE APRIL, WOULD INCLUDE ONLY ONE MARONITE CHRISTIAN WHO IS EXPECTED TO BE FORMER PRESIDENT CAMILLE CHAMOUN. OBSERVERS POINT OUT THAT INCLUSION OF CHAMOUN, WHO IS CONSIDERED TO REPRESENT CHRISTIAN RIGHT-WING, SHOULD SATISFY MANY PHALANGISTS, BUT CONCEDE THAT IT IS FAR FROM CERTAIN THAT MUCH OF THE PHALANGE RANK AND FILE IS PREPARED TO COMPROMISE ON CABINET ISSUE, EVEN IF PHALANGE LEADER, PIERRE GEMAYEL, IS READY TO SHOW FLEXIBILITY.

2. SHIITE SPIRITUAL LEADER, IMAN MUSA AS SADR, BEGAN JUNE 27 HUNGER STRIKE IN LOCAL MOSQUE. IMAM MUSA, WHO HAS DECLARED HIS READINESS TO CONTINUE FAST UNTIL QUOTE NON-PARTISAN UNQUOTE GOVERNMENT IS FORMED, HAS BEEN RECEIVING MOSLEM AND CHRISTIAN LEADERS AND IMAM'S PERSONAL SECRETARY, HUSSEIN AS SADR, TOLD EMBOFF JUNE 28 THAT IMAN BELIEVES HIS SYMBOLIC ACT WILL HASTEN

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BREAK-UP OF POLITICAL LOG-JAM. HUSSEIN REPORTS THAT IMAM, WHO IS FED UP WITH SITUATION AND CONCERNED ABOUT SHIITE CIVILIAN CASUALTIES IN SHIAH CLASHES, HAS CAUTIONED HIS FOLLOWERS AGAINST ARMED ACTION. ACCORDING TO HUSSEIN, WORD OF THE IMAM'S FAST IS GETTING AROUND THIS MORNING AND A LARGE DEMONSTRATION OCCURRED JUNE 28 IN BAALBEK. IMAM, HUSSEIN SAYS, WILL WAIT FOR SEVERAL DAYS TO DETERMINE IF NON-VIOLENT ACTION IS PRODUCTIVE AND THEN DECIDE WHETHER FURTHER MEASURES

(IMPLICATION IS INTERVENTION OF ARMED SHIITE FOLLOWERS OF IMAM MUSA IN SOME MANNER) WERE REQUIRED. SOCIALIST LEADER KAMAL JUMBLATT, WHO IS FRONT-MAN FOR LEBANESE LEFT, HAS PREDICTABLY SUPPORTED LEFTISTS AND PALESTINIAN QUOTE REJECTIONISTS UNQUOTE AND CALLED GENERAL STRIKE IN SUPPORT OF KARAME'S EFFORTS FOR MONDAY, JUNE 30.

3. REVITALIZED POLITICAL ACTIVITIES OCCURRING AGAINST BACKDROP OF CONTINUING TENSION IN CITY. GOL SECURITY SOURCES ADMIT FIRING IN SHIA/AIN RUMANNEH AREA NIGHT JUNE 27/28 WAS PROBABLY SOMEWHAT LIGHTER THAN PREVIOUS TWO NIGHTS, BUT SITUATION REMAINS TENSE AND SOME SHOOTING CONTINUES. AS NOTED IN JUNE 28 STATEMENT BY LIAISON CENTER (FBIS JN280528Y), ROVING GROUPS OF PROVOCATEURS REVERTED AGAIN LAST NIGHT TO RANDOM BOMBINGS THROUGHOUT CITY IN EFFORT TO FAN FLAMES. AT LEAST FOUR HEAVY EXPLOSIONS WERE CLEARLY AUDIBLE AROUND MIDNIGHT IN VICINITY OF EMBASSY AS GROUPS MOVED FOR FIRST TIME DURING CURRENT CLASHES INTO RAOUCHE AND RAS BEIRUT AREAS. CLASHES WERE REPORTED EARLY THIS MORNING IN CITY CENTER (NEAR MAJOR BANKS) AND REPORTEDLY HAVE BEEN RESUMED AT THIS TIME. WE HAVE NO RPT NO OFFICIAL REPORTS OF CASUALTIES DURING LAST 24 HOURS, BUT SOME PAPERS PLACE KILLED DURING PERIOD AT CLOSE TO 20.

4. UNCONFIRMED REPORTS SUGGEST THAT SOME JOCKEYING FOR POSITION TAKING PLACE WITHIN PLO AND EVEN WITHIN FATAH. ONE WELL-KNOWN PALESTINIAN SOURCE INFORMED EMBOFF EVENING JUNE 27 THAT ARMED FATAH AND SA'IQA ELEMENTS HAD BEGUN APPEAR IN STREETS AND THAT DEPLOYMENT RESULTED FROM NEAR-MUTINY AGAINST 'ARAFAT'S POLICY OF NEUTRALITY IN RECENT CLASHES. ANOTHER RELIABLE SOURCE, HOWEVER, STATES THAT THIS REPORT IS OVER-DRAWN, WHILE ADMITTING THAT FATAH LEFT-WING HAS, IN FACT, BEEN MANEUVERING AGAINST 'ARAFAT TO

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GET FATAH INTO THE FRAY. SO FAR AS WE CAN DETERMINE AT THIS TIME, FATAH AND SA'IQA ARE NOT RPT NOT DEPLOYED AND PARTICIPATING AND 'ARAFAT HAS BEEN ABLE TO HOLD TO HIS LINE. WE UNDERSTAND THAT FATAH AND SA'IQA ASSUMED CONTROL TWO OR THREE DAYS AGO OF TEL ZATAR CAMP (WHICH HAS BEEN UNUSUALLY QUIET DURING THIS ROUND) AND EXPELLED ADHERENTS OF JABRIL'S PFLP-GD. RE PARA 6, REFTTEL, TWO ROUNDS WHICH FELL NEAR 'ARAFAT MEETING, HAVE NOW BEEN IDENTIFIED AS MORTARS. WE NOTE THAT CLANDESTINE PALESTINIAN RADIO (FBIS JN271312Y) HAS BLAMED FIRING (NOT UNEXPECTEDLY) ON PHALANGE. IN FACT, RELIABLE NEWSMAN INFORMED US JUNE 28 THAT SHELLS FELL SOME DISTANCE FROM MEETING SITE, AND IT FAR FROM CERTAIN THAT THEY WERE FIRED AT 'ARAFAT. OTHER SIDE, HOWEVER, APPEARS TO HAVE HAD BETTER LUCK WITH THEIR MORTARS IN ATTACK ON MAIN PHALANGE HEADQUARTERS WHICH WAS HIT, CAUSING DAMAGE AND ALLEGEDLY

ONE DEATH.

5. CARETAKER CABINET OF NUR-ADDIN RIFAI MET JUNE 27 (FBIS JN271216Y) AND REPORTEDLY REJECTED PLANS TO IMPOSE STATE OF EMERGENCY. LEBANESE ARMY SOURCES HAVE TOLD US THAT PROPOSAL WAS REJECTED BECAUSE OF EXPECTATION THAT INTERVENTION OF ARMY WOULD INFLAME PASSIONS AND EXCITE OPPOSITION OF MOSLEM COMMUNITY. PERFORMANCE OF INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES, WHICH MOVED SEVERAL DAYS AGO INTO SHIAH/AIN RUMMANEH AREA, APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN RELATIVELY POOR. WITHOUT BENEFIT OF DIRECT OBSERVATION OF OPERATIONS, WE HANDICAPPED IN ASSESSING REASONS FOR THEIR FAILURE TO MOP UP LEFTIST/QUOTE REJECTIONIST UNQUOTE/, GROUPS BUT BELIEVE ONE ANSWER MAY BE RELUCTANCE OF SECURITY FORCES TO ABANDON RELATIVE SECURITY OF THEIR ARMORED VEHICLES TO FLUSH OUT SNIPERS WHO HAVE TAKEN UP POSITIONS IN APARTMENT BUILDINGS. THIS INTERPRETATION ACCORDS WITH NUMEROUS REPORTS WE HAVE RECEIVED OF A PREFERENCE AMONG AT LEAST THREE CHRISTIAN OFFICERS (SINCE TRANSFERRED) FOR RESPONDING TO SNIPERS WITH HEAVY WEAPONS, INCLUDING 75 MM GUNS. THIS TACTIC, WHICH OBVIOUSLY INCREASES CIVILIAN CASUALTIES, HAS ALLEGEDLY CREATED DISAFFECTION WITHIN SECURITY FORCES RANKS, ANGERED MANY OBSERVERS, INCLUDING IMAM MUSA, AND GENERALLY PLAYED INTO HANDS OF LEFTIST/QUOTE REJECTIONIST UNQUOTE INSURGENTS AND THEIR SYMPATHIZERS.

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6. ALL AMCITS REMAIN SAFE TO BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE, BUT WE CONTINUING TO ADVISE OFFICIAL AND NON-OFFICIAL AMERICANS TO RESTRICT TRAVEL TO ABSOLUTE MINIMUM NECESSARY IN ACCORDANCE WITH SUGGESTION OF GOL SECURITY OFFICIALS. BEIRUT AIRPORT CONTINUING TO FUNCTION NORMALLY.
GODLEY

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